

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01
TRSE-00 AID-05 CU-02 /093 W
-----152307Z 083832 /70

R 141456Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9421
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, BF
SUBJ: PLP ELECTION CAMPAIGN GETS OFF TO A BAD START

1. AS PREVIOUSLY PUBLICIZED, P.M. L.O. PINDLING RETURNED TO BAHAMAS EVENING OF JUNE 13TH FROM COMMONWEALTH MEETING IN LONDON. FOLLOWING BRIEF PRESS CONFERENCE AT AIRPORT AND MOTORCADE INTO NASSAU HE ADDRESSED A "MASS RALLY" (EFTIMATED BY EMBASSY OFFICER PRESENT AT SCENE TO NUMBER 2,500) INCLUDING PLP PARTY FAITHFUL BUSSSED IN FROM OUTLYING DISTRICTS OF NEW PROVIDENCE ESPECIALLY FOR THE OCCASION, CURIOUS ONLOOKERS - MOSTLY CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS - AND A SIZEABLE NUMBER OF OPPONENTS FROM BOTH MAJOR OPPOSITION PARTIES. (FNM AND BDP LEADERS HAD URGED THEIR MEMBERS TO ATTEND AND DEMAND ANSWERS TO CHARGES OF GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE TO PROVIDE JOBS, CORRUPTION AND INEFFICIENCY.) AT NO POINT DURING EVENING'S ACTIVITIES WAS CROWD "TURNED ON" BY RHETORIC AND PINDLING'S MUCH VAUNTED CHARISMA SEEMED STRANGELY MUTED IF NOT NONEXISTANT.

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WM TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES WITH LIGHTING, LOUD SPEAKER SYSTEM AND BREAKDOWN OF HIGHLY PUBLICIZED CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION WHICH WAS GIVEN ITS DEBUT AT RALLY ALL PUT A DAMPER ON EVENT, AS DID ANTI-PLP DEMONSTRATORS WHO SEVERAL TIMES DROWNED OUT THE FALTERING PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM. PRINCIPAL CAUSE FOR FAILURE OF RALLY, HOWEVER, WAS PINDLING'S

INABILITY TO SENSE MOOD OF CROWD AND SWITCH FROM PREPARED TEXT ON RESULTS OF COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE, PROMISED INCREASED BAHAMIAN ACTIVITY IN INTERNATIONAL ARENA ETC., TO OLD FASHIONED, DOWN TO EARTH POLITICAL RHETORIC. (AT ONE POINT HE DID LAUNCH INTO A PERSONAL ATTACK OF BDP LEADER BOSTWICK, BUT IN MUTED TERMS WHICH FAILED TO EXCITE HIS BACKERS IN THE CROWD.)

3. AS A RESULT OF LAST NIGHT'S FIASCO, OPPOSITION LEADERS THIS MORNING WILL TAKE NEW HOPE AND PLP ORGANIZERS WILL PRESUMABLY TAKE STEPS TO ALTER THEIR TACTICS OR AT LEAST RHETORICAL EMPHASIS. PRINCIPAL ISSUES REMAIN UNEMPLOYMENT AND SPECIFICALLY TEENAGED UNEMPLOYMENT AND TO LESSER DEGREE CORRUPTION. ANY ATTEMPT BY PLP TO IGNORE OR FAILURE TO SUGGEST REASONABLE AND CONCRETE PROGRAM FOR DEALING WITH FIRST ISSUE CAN ONLY REBOUND TO BENEFIT OF OPPOSITION WHICH IS DEFINITELY ON THE OFFENSE. IN ADDITION, PRESENCE LAST NIGHT OF SEVERAL HUNDRED TEENAGERS WEARING "T-SHIRTS" BEARING OPPOSITION SYMBOLS AND EMPLOYING DISRUPTIVE TACTICS IS NO CAUSE FOR COMFORT FOR ANY RESPONSIBLE OBSERVER AND THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL EXPRESSIONS OF ALARM THAT DISRUPTIVE TACTICS EMPLOYED LAST NIGHT ARE ONLY A PORTENT OF THINGS TO COME. AS IF IN ANTICIPATION OF THIS POSSIBILITY THE ANGLICAN BISHOP OF NASSAU YESTERDAY PUBLICLY APPEALED FOR A NON-VIOLENT POLITICAL CAMPAIGN AND THE NEWLY ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE BAHAMAS CHRISTIAN COUNCIL IS REPORTDLY CONSIDERING A NATIONAL PRAYER SERVICE FOR PEACE DURING THE ELECTION PERIOD. THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT SUCH APPEALS BY THE ECCLESIASTICAL COMMUNITY

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ARE VERY MUCH WARRANTED. TAYLOR

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Message Attributes

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Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION CAMPAIGNS, POLITICAL PARTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 14-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decapton Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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